

A Special Events Checklist

Large or small, most elements of a special event are the same. The following checklist can provide a framework upon which to build.

1. Initiate a general theme or idea.
2. Refine the theme or idea with community opinion leaders. Reach a consensus.
3. Hold a public meeting to generate enthusiasm for the event.
4. Select a director. Structure a working core group to take care of :
 - a. lodging for incoming visitors
 - b. drawings and contests
 - c. decorations, special effects and signage
 - d. entertainment
 - e. facilities and equipment
 - f. hospitality services and information
 - g. food and beverages
 - h. marketing (advertising, public relations, publicity)
 - i. traffic, security, parking, crowd control
 - j. legal (including insurance)
 - k. finance, fundraising, sponsorships
 - l. program participation
 - m. set-up and clean-up
 - n. evaluation
5. Reserve the site. Obtain a list of regulations and rules.
6. Obtain permits, as needed, for assembly, vending, alcohol sales, food sales, gambling (as for a raffle), use of a public address system, special parking, certain signs and banners.
7. Check with the fire marshal.
8. Design proposed layout of the site.
9. Develop ideas, plans for decorations, signage, special effects, the entrances, and exits.
10. Arrange for amenities and services such as portable toilets, provisions for the elderly and handicapped, benches, shaded places, public phones, garbage cans, electric power and equipment, convenient parking for workers and participants.
11. Arrange for equipment – tents, tables, chairs, display boards, poles for signs, flags, posters, stage(s), stage lighting, sound system(s).
12. Arrange for entertainment.
13. Assign workers to handle ticket sales, information booths (with information on points of interest in the area, local restaurants and lodging facilities, highway directions and maps), first aid, lost and found (for children and lost items).
14. Develop co-op advertising and solicit media support.
15. Set-up.

16. Dismantle and clean up.
17. Follow-ups with thank yous and acknowledgments.
18. Evaluate in preparation for next year's event.

The number of volunteer workers you'll need depends upon the magnitude of the event. Most important, involve as many different groups in the community as possible. Some examples include the PTA, business groups, merchant associations, chamber of commerce, churches, cultural or ethnic groups, fire and police departments, schools, college and university students, campus clubs, professionals, service organizations, sports and recreation groups and businesses with specific support capabilities.